

Old Bill

The American artist Frederick Remington drew the image below. In 1898 he was visiting the camp of the 3d Cavalry in Tampa, Florida, where the Regiment was preparing for the invasion of Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

Remington was a close friend of Captain Francis Hardie, who was the commander of Troop G. During his visit, Remington's attention was drawn to one of the troop's NCOs. Sergeant John Lannen struck the artist as the epitome of the cavalryman, and with Hardie's approval, the artist made several rough sketches of Lannen in front of the Hardie's tent. From those rough sketches Remington later executed the now famous drawing portraying a trooper astride his mount with a carbine cradled in his arm.

At some point in the past, this drawing became known as "Old Bill", and today it is universally recognized as the symbol of mobile warfare in the United States Army. This drawing represents a Trooper, a unit and a branch of service.

As was the case with many American soldiers in that conflict, Lannen contracted yellow fever and died in Santiago in 1898 after almost 30 years of faithful service. The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment points with pride to the fact that one of its troopers has bequeathed such a rich legacy to his Regiment, the United States Cavalry, and the United States Army.



"Old Bill"

In early August, the Regiment departed Cuba and sailed for Montauk Point, New York, where it was joined by the four troops which had remained behind. In early September, the entire Regiment left Montauk Point for its new duty station at Ft. Ethan Allen, Vermont.

The 3d Cavalry did not remain together for very long. In February and March of 1899, two troops were assigned to Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, two troops to Jefferson Barracks, four troops and the band to Ft. Myer, Virginia, while the remainder of the Regiment stayed at Ft. Ethan Allen.

The Moro Rebellion

The units had barely arrived at their new duty stations when, on 22 July 1899, the headquarters and eight troops were ordered to Seattle, Washington. From Seattle, this force embarked for the Philippine Islands to operate against the Filipino insurgents. Meanwhile, the remaining four troops of the Regiment were ordered to assemble at Fort Meyer.

The Regiment landed in Manila in October 1899, with the remaining four troops following from Fort Myer in 1900. The 3d Cavalry remained on the island of Luzon until 1902, fighting 62 engagements during that time.



Members of Troop K, 3d U.S. Cavalry ca. 1900.

The Regiment returned to the United States in detachments between April and November 1902. The headquarters, band, and six troops were stationed in Montana, two troops in Wyoming, two in Arizona, and one each in Idaho and North Dakota.

The 3d Cavalry remained in the United States until December 1905, when it was again ordered to the Philippines, this time for peacetime occupation duty. It remained there until 1908, when it was ordered home and stationed in Texas. The following nine years were spent in garrison and patrolling the Mexican border.

World War I

On 17 March 1917, the entire Regiment was transferred to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In April, the United States entered the Great War and in August the Regiment became one of the first units deployed overseas. Arriving in France in November, the Regiment operated three major remount depots until the war's end.

The Regiment's three squadrons cared for horses and mules shipped to the American Expeditionary Force from the United States until such time as these animals were required at the front to carry ammunition and pull artillery. After the armistice, the Regiment was tasked with selling the thousands of remaining animals to French civilians. When they had finished in June, 1919, they assembled at Brest, France and sailed home, arriving on July 4.

The only unit of the 3d Cavalry that saw actual combat was Troop K, which was detached from the 3d Squadron and participated in the last three engagements prior to the Armistice on 11 November 1918. Troop K also was part of the Army of Occupation, remaining in Germany until it was shipped home with the rest of the Regiment in 1919.



The American Expeditionary Force purchased 243,039 horses and mules during WWI, at an average cost of \$379.81.

Between the Wars

On 1 June 1919, the Regiment sailed for Boston and, upon arrival, the headquarters and 1st Squadron moved to Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont. During the 1920's and 1930's the Regiment underwent a series of organizational changes. 2d Squadron, plus troops C and D of 1st Squadron, were inactivated. 3d Squadron was redesignated as 2d Squadron which was stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, becoming known as the 'President's Own'.

Because of its proximity to Washington and Arlington National Cemetery, the 2d Squadron was frequently called upon to furnish honor guards and escorts for distinguished visitors and funeral escorts for distinguished civilian officials and military personnel. On 11 November 1921, the Regiment furnished the cavalry escort for the burial of the Unknown Soldier from WWI in Arlington National Cemetery. Staff Sergeant Frank Witchey, 3d Cavalry, sounded final "Taps". SSG Witchey's trumpet and tabard are displayed in the Regimental Museum. Until 1941, the Regiment provided the guard detail at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Also during the 1920's, and 30's the Regiment became well known throughout the east for the magnificent horse shows and other riding events it either participated in or sponsored. The 3d Cavalry won many ribbons and trophies at these events, while the Regiment's trick riding team became famous for its outstanding displays of horsemanship.



The beginning of mechanization: scout cars at Fort Myer, Virginia, 1935

World War II

With the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the United States entered World War II. In February, the Regiment was moved to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia and then to Fort Benning, Georgia. At Fort Benning, the Regiment was reorganized and redesignated as the 3d Armored Regiment and assigned to the 10th Armored Division.

In January 1943, it was reconstituted as the 3d Cavalry Group (Mechanized). The 1st and 2d Squadrons were redesignated as the 3d and 43d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, respectively. The 3d Cavalry Group moved to Camp Gordon, Georgia where it began training in mechanized operations.



Members of the 3d Cavalry Group (Mecz) raft an M3 scout car across a river during field training exercise at Camp Gordon, Georgia prior to deployment to England in 1943.

After extensive field maneuvers in the southeastern United States, the 3d Cavalry Group arrived in England in June of 1944. On 9 August, it landed in France and became the covering force of XX Corps, part of General Patton's Third U.S. Army. As the spearhead of the XX Corps, the Group led the Third Army's breakout from Normandy.

The Troopers of the 3d Cavalry Group were the first to reach the Meuse River and first to reach the Moselle River and enter the key city of Thionville, France. The 3d Cavalry Group became, on 17 November 1944, the first element of the Third Army to enter Germany and also fought as infantry in operations to reduce the fortress city of Metz.

Next came the envelopment of the Siegfried Line and the pursuit to the Rhine River. The 3d Cavalry crossed the Rhine on 29 March and made a 150-mile, three-day dash to the Bad Hersfeld area north of Fulda as resistance started to crumble. In April and early May, with final victory in sight, the Third Army, with the 3d Cavalry Group in the lead, turned south and raced through upper Austria to link up with the Soviet Army. After hostilities ended, the Group was sent through the Alps to Northern Italy to monitor the activities of the various factions that controlled Yugoslavia when the war ended. When no threat materialized, they moved back to Austria. The 3d Cavalry Group was the first military unit to cross the Alps since Hannibal, in 215 BC.

While in action, the 3d Cavalry Group (Mecz) ultimately moved 3,000 miles in 265 days, 117 of those in continuous combat without a rest! The 3d Cavalry also accounted for over 43,000 enemy troops killed, wounded or captured.

Shortly after the war in Europe ended, the troopers of the 3d and 43d Squadrons returned to the U.S. for a short furlough. They then reported to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Camp Bowie, Texas, respectively, to begin training for the invasion of Japan, but because the war ended with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, their services were no longer required.

Colonel Polk and the Group Headquarters Troop stayed in Germany to operate a displaced persons camp for war refugees. Most of these people were either fleeing the Russian Army or had been released from concentration camps. After the camp was turned over to another organization, these troopers also returned home.



"Task Force Polk Patrols the Saar" by Don Stivers

Patton's Praise

At the War's end, the 3d Cavalry Group, like the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in Mexico City nearly one hundred years earlier, received high praise from its Commanding General. General George S. Patton, Jr. commented on the battlefield actions of the 3d Cavalry Group with these words:

"The 3d Cavalry has lived up to the accolade bestowed upon it at Chapultepec by General Scott. As horse cavalry you were outstanding; I have never seen a better regiment. To your performance as mechanized cavalry, the same applies. It is a distinct honor to have commanded an army in which the 3d Cavalry served."



General George S. Patton, 28th Colonel, awards the Silver Star Medal to Colonel James H. Polk, 32nd Colonel, on May 18, 1945 at Seewalchen, Austria. The occasion was the 99th anniversary of the 3d Cavalry. Polk would eventually become the Commander and Chief of USAREUR.. He retired in 1971 after more than 40 years of service.

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment

Returning from Europe, elements of the 3d Cavalry Group were eventually assembled at Fort Meade, Maryland. On 5 November 1948, the 3d Cavalry Group was redesignated as the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. The 43d Reconnaissance Squadron became the 1st Battalion, while the 3d Reconnaissance Squadron became the 2nd Battalion.

In order to return the Regiment to a three-squadron configuration, the 35th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, an all-Black unit, was reassigned to the Regiment on January 15, 1948. It was redesignated as the 3d Battalion. Its incorporation into the 3d Armored Cavalry marked the first time that African-American Troopers were assigned to the Regiment.

During the period 1948-1951, the Regiment participated in many major field training exercises in the eastern United States. It also conducted training during the summer months for Reserve Component armor units at Fort Meade, MD, and Camps Pickett, and A. P. Hill, Virginia.

The outbreak of the Korean War meant that the Regiment would have to train replacements for that conflict, despite losing many of its officers and Troopers to units going overseas.

In February 1952, the Regiment moved from Fort Meade, to Camp Pickett, where it remained until May 1954. After participating in Exercise FLASHBURN at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the Regiment moved back to Fort Meade.



Regimental Headquarters at Camp Pickett, Virginia, circa 1953

The Regiment began an intense ten week train-up at Camp A.P. Hill on April 1, 1955 which was interrupted when the Troopers were required to fight a devastating fire in Bowling Green, Virginia. The climax to the training was a firepower demonstration on 24 June followed by the return to Ft. Meade from 27 to 29 June.

In August 1955, the Regiment became the first unit to deploy to Germany under Operation Gyroscope--a plan under which divisional and separate regimental-size units were sent overseas as replacements for similar units which would return to the United States. The term Operation Gyroscope refers to the attribute of rotation with stability exhibited by a gyroscope. This was an attempt by the Army to reduce personnel turbulence by transferring entire units rather than individual soldiers.

The advance party arrived in Germany on 26 June. On 2 August, the First and Second Battalions sailed from New York aboard the U.S.N.S. Randall and arrived at Bremerhaven on 10 August. The Third and Provisional Battalions sailed from New York on U.S.N.S. Buckner on 6 August and arrived at Bremerhaven on 14 August.

Replacing the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment, the Regimental Headquarters was stationed at Nuremberg with the 1st Battalion at Bindlach, the 2d battalion at Bamberg, and the 3d battalion at Amberg. The exchange with the 2d ACR was completed by 15 August.



Troopers of the 3d ACR perform border surveillance duties along the border between West Germany and Czechoslovakia.

The troopers participated in many field training exercises such as the NATO maneuver, "Cordon Bleu" and CPX "Polo Ball". In addition, the various units in the Regiment patrolled both the Czechoslovakian and East German borders, frequently working with the West German Federal Border Police, the Bundesgrenzschutz (BGS).

The 3d ACR returned to the United States in February 1958, and was once again stationed at Fort Meade. The Regiment became part of the Strategic Army Corps (STRAC) and, from 1958-1961, it was the recipient of four STRAC streamers, awarded for superior readiness and training.

In reaction to the Berlin Crisis, the Regiment redeployed to Germany in October 1961. Alerted for movement on October 10th, although scattered at different training sites along the Eastern Seaboard, the Regiment arrived at its new duty stations of Baumholder and Kaiserslautern exactly thirty days later.

Seventh Army

The 3d ACR was initially placed under the Seventh Army Support Command and given the mission of rear area security. The Troopers of the Regiment spent many hours reconnoitering the road network in the Seventh Army's area to determine the best routes for rapid deployment in case of attack by the Warsaw Pact.

During 1962 and 1963, the 1st and 2nd Squadrons relieved elements of the 14th ACR for two one-month periods along the East German border. From November 1962 through November 1964, the 3d ACR had a troop attached to the 14th ACR for border surveillance operations on a monthly rotational basis. In February 1964, the Regiment came under the direct control of the Seventh Army. On 10 June 1964, the 2nd Squadron was redesignated as the 1st Squadron, 11th ACR, and returned to the United States with that Regiment.

Concurrently, the 1st Squadron, 11th ACR was redesignated as the 2nd Squadron, 3d ACR and attached to VII Corps with its duty station at Straubling, Germany. The 2nd Squadron continued the mission of the 3d ACR along the Czech border, operating two border camps with one troop until relieved of its border mission and relocated to Kaiserslautern in March 1965.

While it was stationed in Europe, the 3d ACR performed varied and outstanding service for the Seventh Army. The entire Regiment participated in a number of major field training exercises (FTX's), including SCOTCH GAMBIT I and II in 1962, exercise BIG LIFT in 1963, BRANDY STATION in 1965 and SILVER TALON in 1966. In addition, the Squadrons took part as separate units in several other FTX's, such as SABER KNOT in December 1962, a major counter-insurgency exercise in Bavaria in 1964, and LUNDY'S LANE I and II in 1964 and 1965. In these latter exercises, the Squadrons of the 3d ACR acted as aggressor forces to test the capabilities of several British armor units.

From 1961 to 1968, the Regiment was situated with its Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, and the 1st Squadron at Baumholder, the Air Cavalry Troop at Hoppstadten and the 2nd and 3d Squadrons at Kaiserslautern. In December 1966, the Regiment was assigned to V Corps, and in 1967 took part in Exercise LARGE PLAY.



Air Cavalry Troop's Aero Rifle Platoon practices air assault techniques at Ft. Lewis, Washington.

Fort Lewis, Washington

In July 1968, the 3d ACR redeployed to the United States, taking up station at Fort Lewis, Washington, where Second Squadron was inactivated. The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment became a major REFORGER unit, capable of rapidly deploying to Germany in case of an international crisis. The troopers of the Regiment also spent considerable time at the Yakima Firing Center training National Guard cavalry units.

An unusual mission performed by 3d ACR Troopers during this period was that of assisting in the search for D.B. Cooper, the first person to hijack an airliner. Cooper parachuted into a Washington forest from the airplane, but was never caught.

An indicator of the level social unrest in the nation at that time is the fact that the Regiment spent considerable time conducting civil disturbance training with troopers in civilian clothes acting the part of rioters.



Return to Fort Bliss, Texas

In July 1972, after 115 years, the 3d Cavalry returned to Fort Bliss, Texas. The 1st and 3rd Squadrons, Headquarters Troop, Air Cavalry Troop, and 513th Maintenance Company were augmented in 1973 with the addition of several new units. These included the 181st Ordnance Detachment (Missile) and the 66th Military Intelligence Detachment.

The 2nd Squadron, which had been inactivated in 1971 at Fort Lewis, was reconstituted using personnel and equipment from the 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry, which was moved from Fort Meade to Fort Bliss. In 1976, the size of the Regiment was again increased with the addition of the 43rd Combat Engineer Company.

The 3d ACR's readiness was tested in REFORGER 75 during which elements of the Regiment were airlifted to the Federal Republic of Germany and drew prepositioned equipment out of depot stocks. After selected officers and Troopers participated in CPX AUTUMN SAILS with members of the British and West German Armies, the Regiment took part in FTX STRAFFE ZUGEL (Strong Rein) with the German 1st Panzergrenadier Division.

After returning to Fort Bliss, the 3d ACR participated in a number of major exercises. In late 1973, the Regiment took part in BRAVE SHIELD VI, followed by BRAVE RIFLES VII in February 1974, GOBI EXPRESS V in September 1974, BRAVE RIFLES IX in January 1975, and JTX GALLANT SHIELD in the spring of 1975. The Regiment also participated in ORBIT PHANTOM, an annual Command Post Exercise, and (CPX) at Fort Hood, Texas involving III Corps units.

In October of 1976, L Troop participated in a month-long exchange with A Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment of the Royal Australian Armored Corps. The Third Armored Cavalry was once again represented in Germany, when 1st Squadron took part in REFORGER 77. The Regiment was also involved in Exercise BOLD MOVE.



M551 Sheridans and M114A2s near the Hueco Mountains at Ft. Bliss, January 1975.

From April 1978 to May 1979, H Company, 2d Squadron conducted Operational Test II of the then-new XM1 Abrams Main Battle Tank. The Squadron logged nearly 300,000 miles, used over 320,000 gallons of fuel, fired 8,000 rounds of 105mm ammunition, and 200,000 rounds of small arms ammunition in round-the-clock operations with the new tank.

The 407th ASA Company was assigned to the Regiment in 1979 and a year later the 89th and 507th Chemical Detachments were added, providing needed support in the electronic and chemical warfare fields.

In the spring of 1980, elements of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment and the 9th/12th Lancers from the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) traded places with E Troop for a month of desert training.

On 8 April 1981, General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, who had been living at Ft. Bliss, passed away and the Regiment was called upon to support the ceremonies held at Fort Bliss. 2d Squadron provided the Salute Battery and Honor Platoons as well as many other personnel to fill various positions.

In March 1982, the Regiment took part in Exercise BORDER STAR. Another aspect of the Regiment's training and operations has been its affiliation programs with various National Guard Cavalry units from different states. This resulted in numerous training activities with National Guard units both at Fort Bliss and at the Guard's home stations.

The Regimental Aviation Section became the Regimental Support Aviation Troop (RSAT) on 5 March 1982. RSAT's mission was to provide command-and-control aircraft, liaison, troop lift, and critical logistic re-supply support as well as combat medical evacuation. On 29 August 1982, the Regimental advance party departed for Germany for REFORGER 82. 1982 would see the entire Regiment, less Air Cavalry Troop, deploy for operations which would last until October.



Howitzer Battery, Third Squadron at Ft. Bliss, Texas, 1975.

On 16 November 1982, the 407th ASA Company and 66th MI detachment were combined to form the 66th MI Company (CEWI). CEWI (pronounced see-wee) stands for “Combat Electronic Warfare Intelligence”.

In 1985, two events occurred that further enhanced the Regiment’s capabilities. The first was the activation, on 16 April, of the Support Squadron, the first new squadron to be activated since 1960. The other was that 2nd Squadron became the first unit in the United States Army field the M1A1 Abrams tank. Then on 16 October 1988, the Regimental Support Aviation Troop, concurrently with other aviation units, was redesignated as the newest element of the Regiment - the 4th Squadron.



An OH-58 from Air Cavalry Troop during a field training exercise at Ft. Bliss, 1974.

The Persian Gulf War

On 7 August 1990, the Regiment was alerted to move overseas to defend one of our country's allies, Saudi Arabia, from Iraqi aggression. In September, the Regiment arrived in country as part of the XVIII Airborne Corps, and moved into a defensive position south of the Kuwaiti border. During this defensive buildup, known as "Operation Desert Shield", the Regiment trained extensively in anticipation of the ground assault which would be required to liberate Kuwait.

On 17 January 1991, the United Nations initiated "Operation Desert Storm". In "Operation Desert Caravan" the Regiment moved 2400 vehicles 350 kilometers west to set up in the neutral zone on the Saudi/Iraqi border, as the air war progressed overhead. On 22 January 1991, elements of Troop I, led by the 63rd Colonel, Douglas Starr, engaged in the first ground combat by the XVIII Airborne Corps, when they responded to an Iraqi attack on a Saudi outpost.

On 22 February 1991, F Troop, 2nd Squadron led the Regiment across the berms into Iraq for the start of the ground phase of the war. In 100 hours the Regiment moved over 300 kilometers north, then east to Basra, Iraq, ending the war in the Rumaylah oil fields. The Regiment left the remnants of three Republican Guard Divisions in its wake.

As quickly as the Regiment deployed to the Middle East, it returned to Fort Bliss, Texas, arriving 5 April 1991.



Fort Carson, Colorado

In early 1996, the Regiment once again answered the call to "Boots and Saddles" and moved to Fort Carson, Colorado.

The Regiment's home station is named for the famous Colorado frontiersman and military officer, Christopher "Kit" Carson. President Polk had appointed Carson a lieutenant in the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in 1848, in recognition of his service to the nation. However, due to political considerations, brought about by his support of General Stephen W. Kearney's conquest of California, his appointment was not confirmed by Congress. Carson appears on Regimental returns as "appointed but not joined."



Shortly after arriving at the Mountain Post, the Regiment celebrated its 150th anniversary. In addition, various units of the Regiment have since forged partnerships with several communities in the Pike Peak region.

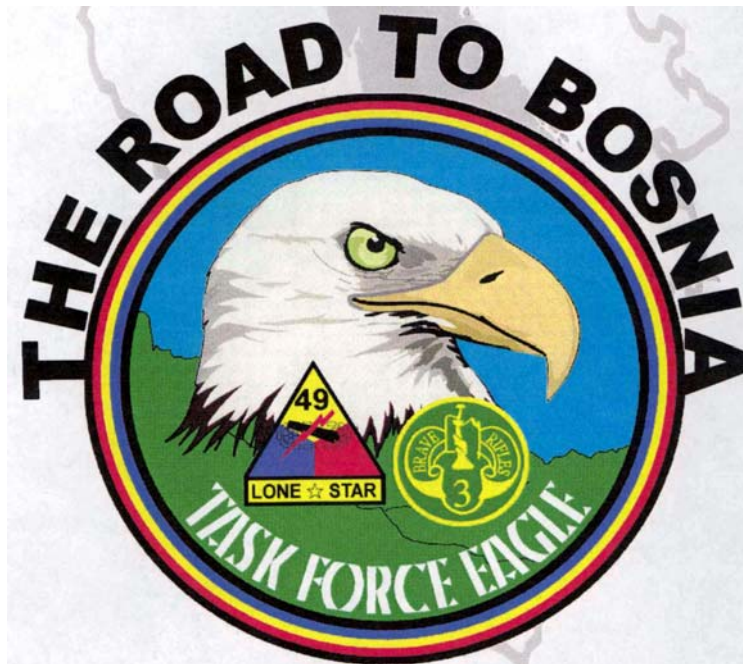
3d ACR Troopers continued to hone their war-fighting skills with operations at Ft. Carson and Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. During Rotation 98-1 at the National Training Center (NTC) at Ft. Irwin, CA, the Regiment once again set the standard and demonstrated its lethality by the destruction of the Opposing Force (OPFOR). This deployment was the best recorded to that date by a Regimental-size unit.

Elements of the Regiment have also operated with other Army units in exercises at the NTC, the Joint Readiness Training Center at Ft. Polk, LA, and other locations.

Bosnia

In August 1998, the Regiment was notified that it would participate in the Bosnian peace-keeping mission as part of Stabilization Force 7 (SFOR 7). This would be a unique deployment because the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment (less 1st Squadron), would be under the operational control of the Texas National Guard's 49th Armored Division. SFOR 7 was the first time that a National Guard organization would have command authority over active component units as well as a multinational force, known as Task Force Eagle.

The Regiment began preparations for the SFOR mission while at the same time continuing its normal training and garrison duties. Arrangements had to be made to store personal property and vehicles, provide for maintenance of military vehicles and equipment that would remain at Ft. Carson, and many other details.



These troopers had to stand down from a more aggressive war fighting posture to act as neutral observers. They trained long and hard at Brcko, a simulated Bosnian village built by Ft. Carson to provide a realistic environment. After taking part in sustained training exercises conducted by other units stationed at Ft. Carson, those members of the Regiment slated for the deployment successfully completed a rigorous exercise at Ft. Polk, Louisiana designed to see if they were ready for the SFOR mission.

When the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment deployed, beginning in February of 2000, it represented 75 percent of the American contribution to the Multinational Division North (MND-N) and constituted the bulk of the American maneuver element.

2nd Squadron was located at Camp McGovern, 3rd Squadron at Camp Dobol while 4th and Support Squadrons operated from Comanche Base.

Saber Squadron's area of responsibility was one of the largest in the Balkans and included Brcko and Modrica. The people of these cities made the mission more demanding because they disliked having the SFOR personnel in their area. Despite this, the Saber patrols covered over 500,000 miles, inspected more than 30 weapons storage sites and collected over 300 weapons and pieces of explosive ordnance.

The Troopers of Saber Squadron helped facilitate the elections that began a new era of democracy for the Bosnian state. There were no major incidents or violent demonstrations in their area of responsibility during the six month deployment. Saber's Troopers also conducted joint operations with the other countries from the multinational force.

Thunder Squadron occupied Camp Dobol and its area of responsibility on 27 March 2000. The Troopers of Thunder Squadron provided security for more than 3000 Bosniak widows and mourners who returned to the Serb-dominated town of Potacari. This town is thought to be the scene of the massacre of over ten thousand Bosniaks by the Bosnian Serb Army in 1995. Despite various attempts to prevent their return, the "Women of Srebrenica" returned safely to mourn and pray at Potacari.

For the first time, a U.S. Army artillery unit conducted patrols as part of the peacekeeping operations for MND-N when the Troopers of Regulator Battery assumed peacekeeping responsibility for Banovici and Zivinici. Other activities included weapons storage site inspections, removal of roadblocks, and confiscation of illegally cached weapons. Thunder Squadron also conducted joint patrols with Turkish, Russian, Estonian, Polish, Swedish, and Danish troops.

The Long Knife Squadron was paired with the 49th Aviation Brigade of the Texas National Guard to form the joint Aviation Brigade for the SFOR 7 rotation. After intensive training, the squadron's aircraft were flown to Corpus Christi, Texas and loaded onto a ship for transport to the port of Rijeka, Croatia.

The Long Knife aviators supported reconnaissance, security, and air movement missions with both American and international units flying missions not only for MND-N, but also for Multi-National Divisions Southwest and Southeast. The aircrews of 4th Squadron flew almost 5,000 sorties for over 2,000 missions, logging more than 12,000 hours.

While the line squadrons were conducting their operations, the Muleskinners of Support Squadron were busy setting up base shop operations at Camp Comanche. In addition, support teams were co-located with Saber Squadron at Camp McGovern and Thunder Squadron at Camp Dobol, as well as at Camp Eagle to support Division Troops.

Over the next seven months Support Squadron provided uninterrupted direct support ground maintenance, aviation intermediate maintenance, supply, medical, and materiel management support to the Regiment as well as the various active duty and reserve units that comprised Task Force Eagle. The Mule Skinners also provided support to, and conducted logistics training with, many of the multi-national elements of Multi-national Division (North).

While the SFOR units were involved in the peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Task Force Rifles (TFR) was activated back at Fort Carson. Composed of Tiger Squadron and all Regimental units remaining at Fort Carson, TFR was tasked with post red cycle duties as

well as the role of care takers for the maintenance of the many vehicles that were not taken to Bosnia.

Additionally, TFR conducted level II gunnery, externally evaluated lane training, and PINON STRIKE 2000 at Pinyon Canyon Maneuver Area. TFR also assumed the role of Opposing Force for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's NTC preparatory training. The Troopers of 571st Medical Company, after standing down from their MAST mission at Fort Bliss, deployed to Kuwait to assume the medevac mission for Operation Desert Spring.

Members of TFR also were tasked to perform the Wild Land Fire Fighting mission, by preparing to deploy to any fires east of the Mississippi River. Tiger Squadron conducted a Level I gunnery and a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise before preparing to receive the units redeploying from Bosnia.

TFR also represented the Regiment at Fort Hood during CPX Ulchi Focus Lens. This exercise simulated the deployment of the Regiment to Korea.

Before the troopers of Task Force Eagle could return to Fort Carson, they had to train their replacements to assume the peacekeeping mission. Once this was accomplished, the various units began returning to Fort Carson and the last unit closed on 7 October 2000.



Members of the 43rd Combat Engineer Company work with engineers from the Srpska Entity Army to erect a Bailey bridge across the Lukavica River in Bosnia. The new bridge allowed local people to move building materials to repair homes that were destroyed in earlier fighting.

Bright Star 01/02

Beginning in September 2001, Tiger Squadron with elements of the Regimental Headquarters and Long Knife and Mule Skinner Squadrons, deployed to Egypt to participate in the Bright Star 01/02 exercise, as part of a Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) coalition. The coalition included Elements from the U.S. Marine Corps, Egypt, France, Kuwait, Greece, Italy, and the British Army.

The Troopers took part in field training and live fire exercises while in Egypt. They also conducted training on nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare, mine warfare, and the use of smoke on the battlefield. Static displays and briefings on Air Defense Artillery capabilities were also provided. Aviation support was provided for the exercise by Long Knife troopers in the form of medical evacuation and personnel transport, while the Mule Skinners of Support Squadron established and operated a logistic support system.

In addition, members of Tiger Squadron and the Regimental Staff were tasked to conduct affiliation training with their Egyptian counterparts to teach them to function as Observer/Controllers (OC) for the forces involved in ground tactical operations, as well as establishing and maintaining communications and command and control between the various multinational OC forces.



A Dragon Company tank maneuvers through the Egyptian desert during BrightStar 01/02.

Valuable experience was gained by all participants, demonstrating that the disparate coalition forces could overcome different doctrines and cultures to successfully work together. All deployed personnel returned to Fort Carson by 10 November.

Operation Iraqi Freedom I

As the U.S. invasion of Iraq began in March 2002, the Troopers of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment readied themselves for deployment in support of the campaign to remove the despotic Saddam Hussein regime.

Beginning in August 2002, the Regiment began to prepare for operations in the Central Command Area of Operations (CENTCOM AOR). The preparations included a National Training Center rotation, Warfighter exercises with both III Corps and V Corps, intensive individual and collective training, weapons qualification, and lane training at Fort Carson.

In addition to the intense training, the Regiment fielded many pieces of new equipment, and reactivated its second AH-64A Apache attack helicopter troop.



The 70th Colonel, David A. Teeples (L), and the XVI RCSM, John R. Caldwell bid farewell to members of the Regiment at Colorado Springs Airport Jet Center as they board the flight to Kuwait.

The 3d ACR received a deployment order for movement to the CENTCOM AOR on 14 February 2003. Equipment was prepared and moved by rail from Fort Carson to the port of Beaumont, Texas. The first Troopers arrived in Kuwait on 2 April and the remainder of the Regiment was in theater by the middle of the month.

The main body of the Regiment crossed the border into Iraq on 25 April 2003, but Baghdad had fallen and shortly thereafter President Bush announced the end of major combat operations. The Regiment missed the high profile assault into Iraq, but upon its arrival, it was immediately tasked to perform an economy of force mission to secure and stabilize the

western part of the country. This area had been by-passed during the advance to Baghdad, and the Regiment had little intelligence on what would be found there. They found that they had been given responsibility for Al Anbar Province, the largest province in Iraq, which covered fully one third of the country, or about 140,000 square kilometers. This was the largest single operational area of any unit, including divisions, in the theater and it included the “Sunni Triangle”, the part of Iraq that Saddam Hussein, his family, and the senior leaders of the Ba’ath Party called home. Al Anbar was home to 48 primary and 14 sub-tribes and it shared a 900 kilometer western border with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria.

The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment became the nucleus of a Regimental Combat Team named Task Force Rifles with the attachment of numerous units (see Appendix H for a list of attached units). While the Regiment’s strength grew to include five squadrons, four battalions, and eight separate companies totaling more than 8,300 troops, Task Force Rifles, was the smallest major subordinate command in Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7).



PV2 Joseph M. King of Apache Troop provides security for his dismounted team while they sweep the area after an ambush near the headquarters of the Ba’ath Party in Husaybah on 27 October 2003. Photo courtesy Andy Rogers/Colorado Springs Gazette.

The various elements of Task Force Rifles successfully performed many missions across the entire spectrum of military operations from offensive actions to civil affairs operations. Daily operations included reconnaissance, security patrols, escort duty, static security, and presence patrols. Other types of missions included capturing or killing former regime elements, securing mass grave sites, and restoring law and order by opening Iraqi police stations, courthouses, and prisons. Tankers, artillerymen and other Troopers whose specialties don’t normally require them to perform these types of missions found themselves operating like infantry and scouts.

The combat units were asked by the city of Fallujah not to use their tracked vehicles for patrolling in the built up areas because it would disrupt the community. To increase mobility and decrease damage to infrastructure, they adopted High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) for many of these operations. The trade-off for the increased mobility was that the patrols became highly vulnerable to terrorist attacks, particularly those employing Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). As a result of these attacks, use of armored vehicles was eventually resumed.

Offensive operations mounted by Task Force Rifles included RIFLES SCORPION, RIFLES GO WEST, RIFLES BLITZ, AND RIFLES FURY. Task Force Rifles initiated operations by conducting reconnaissance missions in the Euphrates River Crescent to identify targets, remove hostile Ba'ath Party members from power, and eliminate anti-coalition media sources.

The Regimental Combat Team continued combat operations focusing on finding and destroying regime loyalist camps and weapons caches between Lake Tar Tar and the Euphrates River. This operation resulted in the apprehension of several individuals from the Defense Intelligence Agency's Top 55 Black List of High Value Targets (HVTs).



PFC James V. Garza (L) and SPC Ruperto Estrada of 3rd Platoon, Grim Troop apply C4 plastic explosive to 82 millimeter mortar ammunition stacked for demolition during "Operation Longstreet" about 50 miles northwest of Fallujah.

By the end of August, the Task Force had confiscated 1,080 122mm artillery rounds, 928 mortar rounds, 8,991 23mm rounds, 2,828 AK-47s, two pistols, 10 anti-tank missiles, 45 anti-tank mines, eight surface-to-air missiles, four kegs of gunpowder, 300 130mm high explosive rounds, three boxes of hand grenades, 20 high explosive anti-tank rounds, 125 100mm tank gun rounds, 134 rocket-propelled grenades, two sniper rifles, 30 37mm anti-aircraft rounds, one improvised explosive device, and one SA-7 surface-to-air guided missile system.

The Task Force found an Iranian terrorist organization called the Mujahideen e-Khalq (MEK) occupying a compound in Fallujah. While the MEK appeared to have taken no action against Coalition forces, on 9 May, it was forced to turn over its weapons and evacuate the compound.

Hand in hand with combat operations, Task Force Rifles spent an enormous amount time and energy performing civil-military operations (CMO). The first of these was establishing a Government Support Team (GST) in Ar Ramadi. The GST opened its office in the Ar Ramadi Municipal Building in order to establish a relationship with the civic leaders and directors of the local infrastructure, allowing the GST to work along side the leaders of the capital of Al Anbar.

One of the challenges facing both the GST and local government officials was developing a decentralized approach to operations because of the distance from Baghdad and the fact that the local authorities were used to highly centralized control by the old regime. The Regimental Commander, Colonel David A. Teeples, the GST, and the Regimental Staff all provided guidance so that the local leaders could begin learning to operate independently.



Sheik Bezie Al Gaoud (L) and Sheik Abdul Razak, present Colonel David A. Teeples, 70th Colonel of the Regiment, with a sword in his office at Al Asad Air Base. The Sheiks are among the most important figures in the leadership of Al Anbar Province.

In order to help the local officials adapt to the new system, Colonel Teeples established bi-weekly meetings with the most important leaders in Al Anbar. This assistance began to show results after a few months as the new leaders began to govern with increasing independence.

Colonel Teeples communicated coalition goals and his priorities of security, fuel, and employment, directly to all of the sheiks of the province during the first to two meetings he hosted with them. At the second meeting in July, in addition to the sheiks, several mayors were invited to join the proceedings to further strengthen the cooperation between coalition forces and leaders.

In August 2003 when one from Al Anbar was invited to sit on the new Iraqi Governing Council in Baghdad, the people of Al Anbar were outraged. In order to preserve the progress that had been achieved so far, the Governor, sheiks, and civic and religious leaders from each community were invited to participate in a new Al Anbar Provincial Council.

Following the election of a Council Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Council met at various locations around the province and began work on resolving issues that affected local citizens. This was also the first time that women were allowed to take part in the government process. The Province Council evolved into a functioning civilian government that demonstrated that the democratic process would work for the people.



With Predatory Battery providing security, Iraqi workers line up to be paid by the Al Anbar Provincial Governate.

Despite being determined to take charge of their own affairs, the lack of resources made any progress extremely difficult. In an effort to re-energize local government agencies and get people back to work, the GST was able to channel over 60 million U.S. dollars to some 40,000 civil servants in Fallujah, Habbaniyah, Ramadi, Hit, Hadithah, Al Qaim, and Ar Rutbah and about 30,000 former soldiers living in the province who had been sent home during CJTF-7's consolidation prior to Task Force Rifles' arrival in the province.

The Task Force facilitated the hiring of 400 workers for the Ar Ramadi Department of Sanitation, many of whom were hired from the Al Tesh refugee camp. Wherever possible, local people were put to work on these projects, and by the end of September over 30 million dollars had been disbursed by Task Force Rifles.



SGT Carl D. Harding, CSM Gilberto Muniz, and CPT Mary Thompson, all of HHT, Support Squadron, give school supplies to children at a boy's school in Iraq. Over 300 schools in Task Force Rifles' area of responsibility were renovated and re-opened.

Various units of the Task Force found themselves managing a large number of projects, many to rebuild the infrastructure and restore basic services, efforts aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. The old regime turned many schools in Iraq into munitions storage facilities, in the belief that the munitions would be secure because the Coalition Forces would not attack schools.

The United Nations World Food Program facility, operating from Ar Ramadi, was initially secured by elements of the Task Force. This facility received and distributed over 1,400 truck loads of food to the local citizens. Task Force Rifles also distributed over 49,000 Humanitarian Daily Rations (HDRs) to various hospitals, clinics, and other facilities in the area.

Additionally, hospitals were renovated. Unlike those facilities used by the members of the regime, health care facilities used by the common people were found to be far below normal standards. The Task Force brought medical care to people who had never seen a health



SPC David S. Selby leads other members of 1st Platoon, Lightning Troop as they execute a raid in Rawah, Iraq.

care professional in their lives. Medical supplies and equipment were provided to the Iraqi facilities along with food and other basic items. Specialized healthcare was provided by a clinic established and staffed by female Task Force personnel especially to provide treatment to Iraqi women.

Task Force Rifles established the first Highway Patrol in Iraq and hired over 1500 police officers and other security personnel. Providing employment to idle citizens not only gave them an income, but put more responsibility for their security into their own hands.

Another security mission performed by Task Force Rifles was taking control of the border crossing points of Husayba (Syria), Tenaif (Syria), and Trebil (Jordan). In addition, a crossing control point was established at Ar Ar (Saudi Arabia) where only an open border had existed before. There was an urgent need to gain control of these border crossing points to prevent more support for foreign terrorists from entering Iraq.

The Task Force, in conjunction with the Al Anbar governor, stood up a force of several hundred border guards who were paid by the Al Anbar Governorate rather than by coalition forces. An additional requirement was to have the crossing point at Ar Ar up and manned in time for the Haj pilgrimage to the holy cities of Saudi Arabia. Approximately 31,000 Iraqis took advantage of the opportunity to take part in the Haj.

Another Task Force project to increase security was the establishment of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) training facility north of the city of Hit. More than 3000 troops were trained allowing two ICDC battalions to be raised.



Outlaw Troop maintenance personnel perform maintenance on an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. Longknife Squadron's helicopters provided continuous support to the various ground elements of Task Force Rifles.

Long Knife Squadron established aerial border qualification standards and became the first aviation unit in theater to operate well inside the 5 kilometer buffer zone established by U.S. Central Command. The success of the program resulted in its adoption by Combined Joint Task Force 7 (CJTF-7) as the theater standard.

Over 20 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were established in order to provide the best possible living conditions for the Task Force, and from which combat, security, and support operations could be conducted throughout a 140,000 square kilometer area.

The various Forward Operation Bases (FOBs) established by the Task Force became nodes in a massive logistical network. The various support organizations in the Task Force ran more than 800 convoys, driving over 3.8 million miles to keep Task Force units supplied with everything needed to continue operations.

These support units, used to operating in relative security, found themselves to be prime targets since terrorists discovered that the vehicles with little or no armor were easy targets and focused their attention on them. The support units learned to deal with the threat and continued to march, playing a vital role in securing peace and stability in Al Anbar Province.



Colonel Teeples and Sergeant Major Caldwell case the Regimental Color at Rifles Base during the Change of Responsibility Ceremony with the 7th Marine Regimental Combat Team.

Near the beginning of January, heavy equipment and vehicles had begun moving south to Kuwait to be prepared for the voyage home. While vehicles were loaded as the ships became available, Troopers of the 3d ACR began flying back to the U. S. on 23 March.

On 18 January initial contact was made with the U.S. Marine Corps' 7th Regimental Combat Team when representatives of that unit arrived at Rifles Base for briefings in order to begin the planning necessary to accomplish the Marines' relief of Task Force Rifles. The Marines began arriving in numbers by the middle of February, and beginning on 4 March, joint missions were conducted with Marine units.

Task Force Rifles continued to conduct combat operations until 14 March 2004 when authority for the Al Anbar Province Area of Operations was officially transferred to the U.S. Marine Corps.

The Regimental Combat Team's last flight from Al Asad occurred on 18 March. The last flight from Kuwait departed on 31 March 2004.

Despite the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment's successes with the many and varied missions it performed in Iraq, it should be remembered that the Regiment and its attachments were still operating in a combat environment. At any given time in the Regimental Combat Team's area of responsibility, at least some Troopers were under fire. Approximately 400 citations for valor were awarded, but 33 3d Armored Cavalry officers or Troopers died during Operation Iraqi Freedom I. 18 attached Troopers of the Task Force also died. 233 Task Force Rifles Troopers were wounded. The names and units of the Troopers who died may be found at Appendix I.



The memorial service at Forward Operating Base Tiger for SGT Michael E. Dooley of Bandit Troop. SGT Dooley was killed in Action at Al Qaim, Iraq on 8 June 2003.

Operation Iraqi Freedom III

The Brave Rifles team had barely settled back into Fort Carson when, in July 2004, another deployment order alerted the Regiment that it would return to Iraq. This gave the members of the Regiment only about 10 months back home with their families, to ready equipment and train up before returning to the CENTCOM Theater of Operations. In August over 400 members of the Regiment reenlisted together in a mass ceremony.

In a flurry of activity, the Fort Carson Directorate of Logistics, in conjunction with contractor personnel, “up-armored” the Regiment’s tactical wheeled vehicle fleet before it was shipped back to Iraq. This represented a major improvement in protection for personnel who had previously been required to operate thin-skinned vehicles under the threat of Improved Explosive Devices (IED).

In March, the Regiment deployed once again to Kuwait and began moving into Iraq at the beginning of April, 2005. The Regiment initially deployed to southern Baghdad Province in April of 2005 where it conducted operations for almost two months. Saddam Hussein used the fertile farmlands and luxurious riverside mansions of South Baghdad as rewards for top party officials, military officers, secret police, and intelligence agents. After the fall of the regime, the area became one of the most troubled regions in Iraq and a staging area for terrorist operations against Baghdad.



SSG Nathan Rico of Lightning Troop moves his Bradley Fighting Vehicle through the countryside south of Baghdad during a zone reconnaissance mission, 7 April 2005. Photo courtesy Todd Heisler/Rocky Mountain News.

Upon their arrival to South Baghdad, the Regiment conducted reconnaissance and offensive operations to defeat the enemy insurgent network and deny the enemy the ability to disrupt political and economic development in the capitol city of six million people.

First (Tiger) Squadron, Third (Thunder) Squadron, and 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor (which was attached to the Regiment), conducted combined reconnaissance and offensive operations with the Iraqi Army's Intervention Force. During Operations Tiger Walk, Bolt Down, and Brush Back, the Regiment captured entire insurgent cells and uncovered stockpiles of munitions. 4th (Long Knife) Squadron's helicopters allowed the Regiment to gain and maintain contact with an elusive enemy. The combined air-ground effort denied the enemy freedom of movement and allowed the Regiment to kill or capture eight triggermen responsible for roadside bombs. As a result, attacks along the main supply route (Route Tampa) fell dramatically and the Regiment was able to protect critical areas such as Baghdad International Airport.



SPC Brantwan Smith provides overwatch for Iraqi Intervention Force Soldiers with other members of Apache Troop during Operation Tigerwalk in Babil Province on 20 April 2005. Materials for making improvised explosive devices were found in the house. Photo courtesy Craig F. Walker/Denver Post.

As the Regiment began conducting counterinsurgency operations in south Baghdad, Saber Squadron responded immediately to new orders and began movement to Western Ninewa Province. Support (Muleskinner) Squadron, sustained fast paced operations from an immature base while supporting Saber Squadron's movement to what would become the new Regimental area of operations.



An Iraqi woman hurries away from her house as Tiger Squadron Troopers and Iraqi Intervention Force Soldiers search it during Operation Tigerwalk in Babil Province, south of Baghdad, 20 April 2005. Photo courtesy Craig F. Walker/The Denver Post.

In mid-May, after severely disrupting the enemy networks between the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys south of Baghdad, the Regiment undertook a new mission to defeat a highly organized terrorist network in northwest Iraq, centered on the ancient city of Tall Afar.

Thunder Squadron, initially reinforced with the Regiment's Air Defense Battery (Predator), an engineer platoon from the 43rd Engineers (Sappers), the Attack Aviation Troop (Renegade),

3rd Platoon, Dragon Company from Tiger, and Iraqi Army advisors from Tiger, remained in Southern Baghdad to give the Third Infantry Division the combat power it needed to defeat a deeply rooted terrorist network and protect Baghdad from the devastating terror attacks originating from this area.

In September of 2004, Iraqi security forces in Tall Afar collapsed, and the town and the region around it became an insurgent training area and staging base. Two months later, terrorists used this area to organize and conduct systematic attacks on Mosul, a city of 2.5 million people. Foreign extremists, combined with local insurgents and criminals under the organization Al Qaeda in Iraq, began a reign of terror that choked the life out of Tall Afar, Baij, and Avgani while victimizing people throughout the region. Saber Squadron, along with a small Regimental command and control group, and a forward logistical element from Muleskinner led the Regiment to Tall Afar in mid April.

The Regiment's area of operations in Western Ninewa Province spanned 33,000 square kilometers and included 278 kilometers of the Syrian/Iraqi border (the Rabiya Port of Entry was particularly critical as the only legal border crossing in Ninewa Province). The population of Western Ninewa is approximately 655,000 with about 200,000 people living in Tall Afar. The Regiment partnered with an Iraqi Border Police brigade of five battalions manning forty-two forts along the Syrian border.

One Iraqi Army brigade occupied the western area of operations with battalions in Rabiya, Biaj, and Sinjar, while another brigade operated in Tall Afar, and a third brigade operated from the Al Kisik Military Base in the northern area of operations. The Regiment also partnered with the Iraqi Police across the Province and worked to increase their capabilities and introduce them into communities with little police presence. Special Forces operational detachments and Military Transition Teams proved invaluable in accelerating the Iraqi Army's development. The Regiment rapidly developed close relationships with their Iraqi partners.

The Regiment, reinforced by the 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry, immediately challenged the terrorist stronghold in Tall Afar. Throughout the months of May, June, and July, Saber Squadron developed accurate intelligence through effective reconnaissance operations. The Squadron's ground units conducted raids and engaged in several pitched battles with the enemy that lasted several hours – some of the toughest urban combat seen by American units in Iraq. The enemy countered the advantage provided to the Troopers on the ground by reconnaissance aircraft by developing a highly organized air defense network that relied on timely communications and large volumes of small arms and machine gun fire.



SSG Justin Vasquez of L Troop questions an Iraqi who was found a cell phone in a car parked near the scene of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack on an L Troop HMMWV that occurred on 10 April 2005. Cell phones can be used to detonate IEDs. Sergeant Vazquez was killed in action by on 5 June 2005. Photo courtesy of Todd Heisler/Rocky Mountain News

Enemy actions against the Regiments air assets resulted in damage to 12 aircraft in less than two months of intense fighting.

Saber Squadron, reinforced by Dragon Company from Tiger Squadron, countered the enemy offensive by building positive relationships with the people that led to accurate intelligence. It was clear that Tall Afar was under the control of Al Qaeda in Iraq. The so-called “Battalion of the One True God” was highly organized into four combat battalions, each numbering between 500 and 1000 fighters. The insurgent stronghold was in the Sarai District – a dense network of ancient, multi-story stone buildings, laced with courtyards cross cut with winding narrow alleyways, thus not accessible to armored vehicles. It was clear to the Iraqi Army and Regimental leadership that to wrest control of the city from the insurgents, a large scale, combined offensive with Iraqi Army and police units, would be required. The Regiment and the 3rd Iraqi Division began planning the operation in early July. Saber Squadron set conditions for the operation by improving the local government, beginning the reconstitution of the police, and engaging tribal leaders.



An Outlaw Troop OH-58D Kiowa Warrior armed reconnaissance helicopter flies over Tall Afar.

In late May, while Thunder Squadron assumed a brigade-sized mission South of Baghdad and Renegade Troop operated temporarily with the 3rd Infantry Division, the Regimental Headquarters, Tiger Squadron, Longknife Squadron, and Muleskinner Squadron joined Saber Squadron and initiated combat operations across Western Ninewa Province. The Regiment immediately launched Operation Veterans Forward to establish Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and Iraqi Border Police across the vast Syrian border region – a region the enemy was using to access external support from Syria.

2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry returned with Iraqi Army units and Longknife Squadron conducted a zone reconnaissance in the vast Jazeera desert region of Ninewa and Al Anbar Provinces to the north bank of the Euphrates River. The joint operation uncovered weapons caches and killed or captured eight foreign terrorists responsible for the kidnapping and death of the governor of Al Anbar Province.

Tiger Squadron, reinforced with Sapper Company and Predator Battery, established itself in the west operating from bases that spanned over 100 kilometers from the border town of Rabi-yah to the cities of Sinjar and south to Biaj. By the end of May, Tiger had established permanent security and its main operating base in the town of Sinjar and had secured the critical supply route that follows the ancient Silk Road from the Syrian border to Tall Afar.

One June 1st, Tiger Liberated the town of Biaj from the terrorists and immediately re-established permanent security with Apache Troop, Iraqi Army, and Police. This successful operation set a precedent for future Regimental counterinsurgency operations across Western Ninewa Province. Tiger then moved north of Sinjar Mountain and established security at the Syrian Border town of Rabi-yah, where they dismantled passport forging rings and captured other terrorist facilitators. The Regiment helped to establish the border police and severely restricted the enemy's ability to smuggle weapons, terrorists, and suicide bombers into Ninewa Province and Iraq.

In late July and early August, Saber Squadron, Tiger Squadron, U.S. Army Special Forces, and the Iraqi Army conducted a series of operations to defeat the enemy in Avgani, a small town north of Tall Afar that had served as a terrorist stronghold. An Iraqi Army battalion with US Army Special Forces advisors then established permanent security with an Iraqi Police force built from scratch.



Members of Eagle Troop establish security during a raid in Avgani on 13 June 2005. Photo courtesy Christoph Bangert/Polaris

Meanwhile, Long Knife Squadron organized a new Q troop, called Quickstrike, that consisted of an attached COLT (Combat Observation and Lasing Team) platoon, a platoon from Predator Battery, and a platoon of Iraqi Army Soldiers. Quickstrike gave Long Knife Squadron a unit that could move rapidly over long distances and be inserted to conduct ground reconnaissance missions. Quickstrike conducted reconnaissance and security operations in the vast desert in the Southern part of the Regiment's area of Operations and along the Syrian border.



SPC Crystal Cason, a property book clerk in HHT, Support Squadron, cleans the .50 caliber machinegun she uses when she moves out as a gunner on Muleskinner convoy missions. Photo courtesy Craig F. Walker/The Denver Post.

The Regiment could not have conducted these operations without the work of Muleskinner Squadron. Muleskinner moved thousands of tons of building materials, fuel, water, and ammunition across an area covering 22,000 sq kilometers while mechanics, medics, truck drivers and other support troopers worked tirelessly to sustain the Regiment as our troopers pursued the enemy and brought security to the people of the vast desert region.

Prior to coalition operations in August, Al Qaeda in Iraq attempted to reinforce their efforts in Tall Afar. A prominent Al Qaeda in Iraq website proclaimed that the "Lions of Tall Afar" would never surrender their stronghold and that they would repel all coalition and Iraqi Army attempts to regain control of the city. The purpose of Operation Resorting Rights was to defeat the insurgency in Tall Afar so that the enemy could no longer effectively conduct a campaign of intimidation and coercion against the local population, and to destroy the enemy bases of operations they used to stage attacks across Western Ninewa Province and Iraq. The Iraqi Army and the Coalition Forces aimed to separate the enemy from the population and set conditions to allow the Regiment to recruit and reconstitute the police in Tall Afar, which was the first step in introducing the rule of law back into Tall Afar.

Shaping operations for Operation Restoring Rights began with area reconnaissance in outlying communities where the Regiment received intelligence that the enemy was transiting back and forth to Tall Afar. Under the advice of the Iraqi Army, the 43rd Combat Engineer Company then established an eight foot high wall around Tall Afar, to control movement in and out of Tall Afar. As the wall was being built, the Regiment then integrated 9 Iraqi Army and Police battalions – over 5,500 Iraqi Soldiers and police officers -- into operations in and around Tall Afar. These forces included a battalion from the 2nd Iraqi Army Division from Irbil, an Iraqi Special Forces battalion, a Commando Brigade, and the Mosul Emergency Police Battalion, and five battalions from the 3rd Iraqi Army Division.

As Saber Squadron conducted operations in Tall Afar, Tiger Squadron conducted reconnaissance from the western part in the area of operations moving east towards Tall Afar. Tiger Squadron was called upon to reinforce combat efforts during Operation Restoring Freedom. Upon arrival in Tall Afar, Tiger conducted a relief in place with Saber Squadron and assumed control of the Western portion of the city – an area where the enemy had waged a brutal campaign of intimidation and used vacated homes to set-up complex attacks on our forces. Tiger immediately took the fight to the enemy and inflicted heavy losses and prevented them from diverting the Regiment away from their safe haven in Sarai.

Simultaneous to Tiger's Offensive Operations in the West, Saber Squadron conducted a deliberate attack into Eastern Tall Afar to isolate the enemy's safe haven in Sarai. Insurgents fought to stop the Regiment and the Iraqi Army's advance, but suffered heavy losses at the hands of Saber Squadron, the Iraqi Army, and the Regiment's attack and reconnaissance aircraft.

While Saber Squadron isolated the enemy in the Sarai district, the Regiment took measures to evacuate civilians from the neighborhood through a screening site manned by Muleskinner Squadron and the Mosul Emergency Police Battalion. During the course of the evacuation, Tiger Squadron moved southeast towards the Sarai district to further isolate insurgents located in Sarai, while attack aviation, along with precision artillery combined with effective ground reconnaissance and fires, defeated the enemy in detail as they tried to escape.

As coalition forces moved in on the enemy, the Regiment gained key intelligence from civilians who wanted to regain control of the city. Intelligence reports indicated that insurgent leadership and fighters had been so depleted that remaining insurgent leaders had began to advise their fighters to escape Tall Afar at all costs. In order to seize insurgents as they fled the city, Iraqi Army and Police forces helped the Regiment to identify enemy fighters trying to escape, capturing over 800 enemy fighters.

While the Regiment began to clear enemy homes in the Sarai district, 2nd Battalion, 325 Infantry Regiment (Airborne) from the 82nd Airborne Division (White Falcon) was sent to help strengthen forces already in place. This dismounted infantry battalion gave the Regiment the ability to effectively clear the remainder of the Sarai district and prevent the enemy from regaining a foothold in the area. From 24 August – 23 September, the Regiment killed over 150 enemy fighters.

As the bulk of the Regiment fought in Northwest Iraq, Thunder Squadron became the keystone of the Third Infantry Division's counterinsurgency efforts in South Baghdad while they also secured the most critical supply route in the theater. Their aggressive pursuit of this enemy dealt a severe blow to the terror network in this critical area, killing scores of enemy and

detaining hundreds, resulting in the breakup of enemy terror cells.

In addition to all important route security, Thunder Squadron conducted numerous operations against enemy safe havens, leading the Third Infantry Division's efforts in this critical area. The entrenched enemy in South Baghdad used the complex canal system to hide while planning and staging devastating terror attacks in Baghdad. Thunder Squadron fought through the tough urban and rural area and established key intelligence sources to penetrate the enemy's networks as they also formed partnerships with a newly formed battalion from the Iraqi Army's 6th Division.



Lieutenant Alan Sholes of Lightning Troop searches for weapons caches on a farm south of Baghdad on 7 April 2005. Photo courtesy Todd Heisler/Rocky Mountain News.

While in theater, Thunder Squadron conducted fourteen air assault operations to kill or capture enemy cells and also established Iraqi Army patrol bases to regain control of this region in order to protect the people from the enemy's brutal campaign of intimidation. Their innovative use of air assault tactics, indirect fires, and patrol bases has become the model for the 4th Infantry Division's counterinsurgency efforts in the difficult south Baghdad region.

The Regiment secured the victory in Tall Afar and across Western Ninewa Province by partnering with Iraqi Army, moving into the communities and living among the people, and re-establishing the Iraqi Police that were representative of the ethnic and sectarian balance in the Area of Operations. Immediately following Operation Restoring Rights, the enemy realized they had lost control of the city and responded to their losses with brutal suicide bombings in an attempt to intimidate the population. Tasting freedom, the people of Tall Afar refused to be intimidated and up to 70% of the population living in Tall Afar voted in the October Referendum. The pall of fear over the city lifted, and the people responded by joining the police force, recruiting over 1765 joined the Tall Afar police force and more than 2700 citizens of Western Ninewa enlisted in the Iraqi Army.

The Regiment, working closely with the local and national Iraqi government agencies, initiated reconstruction of the city, schools, roads, and parks. Today, over 95% of Tall Afar enjoys almost twenty hours of electricity each day, while the market places are open and the people genuinely are excited about the future of Tall Afar. As further testament to the revitalization of Tall Afar, over 85% of the population across Western Ninewa Province turned out to vote in December 2005 for their first full term government.

More importantly, Iraqi Security Forces have taken the lead in conducting counterinsurgency operations. Along the border, Iraqi Border Police routinely interdict smugglers with no assistance from Coalition Forces. Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police across the area of operations secured polling sites with little or no coalition assistance. In Tall Afar and towns throughout the area, local tips hotlines and a Joint Coordination Centers allowed Iraqi Police to respond instantaneously to reports of insurgent activity. The Iraqi Army took the lead in establishing security across the province and works closely with the Iraqi Border Police and Iraqi Police to provide security for Western Ninewa Province.



COL H.R. McMaster speaks to an Iraqi man during a reconnaissance mission south of Baghdad on 12 April 2005. Photo courtesy Craig F. Walker/ The Denver Post.

Terrorists want Iraq to descend into civil war so terrorist organizations can use this land to plan, organize, and conduct mass murder not only in this region, but against all civilized peoples. Western Ninewa seemed the ideal place to incite ethnic, sectarian, and tribal conflict because it is populated by Kurds, Arabs, Yezidis, and Turkomen, who are further sub-divided into Turkomen Shia and Turkomen Sunni. After the Regiment and its Iraqi partners reestablished security for the people, reconciliation began between the city's and the region's various factions. Life returned to Tall Afar and villages across the province. People are no longer afraid.

They are cooperating with rapidly improving Iraqi Security Forces. Economic and political development is proceeding because 3d ACR Troopers, fighting alongside their Iraqi brothers, made a difference in real people's lives across Western Ninewa Province and Southern Baghdad Province, helped bring security and freedom to the Iraqi people. These efforts helped secure our own nation and all civilized peoples from terrorists determined to perpetuate hatred and violence.

The 3d ACR once again paid a stiff price for its participation in the Global War on Terrorism. 39 members of the Regiment died during this deployment and approximately 126 were wounded. 4 attached Soldiers also died. Despite this sacrifice, the officers and Troopers of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment have once again added pages to the heritage established over 160 years ago by the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen.

Into the Future

As a result of the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, the military forces of the United States have been committed in a new kind of war against a new enemy: the Global War on Terrorism. Muslim extremists have vowed to destroy the American way of life, uniting the nation in a way unseen since World War II.



The Army is undergoing a radical transformation in organizational structure, new equipment continues to be fielded, and new tactics, techniques, and procedures, learned in combat, are being assimilated, all while fighting this war. If nothing else was learned from the fall of the Berlin wall, we have learned that change is inevitable.

While the 3d ACR was engaged in OIF III, the announcement was made that it would move to Fort Hood, Texas after its return from Iraq. In addition, a number of changes to the Regiment's organization are scheduled to take place in conjunction with the transformation of the Army. Some of these changes have already taken place.

The 571 Medical Company (Air Ambulance) — Witchdoctor Company — was detached from the Regiment and deployed back to Iraq independently. After serving as a part of the Brave Rifles family since July, 1996, the 571st was inactivated on 15 April 2006.

Long Knife Squadron will undergo other change, as well. The new organization will have three attack helicopter troops, a utility helicopter troop, an aviation intermediate maintenance troop, and an aviation unit maintenance troop. The Regiment will also lose its air defense unit when Predator Battery inactivates on 5 June 2006.

After the 3d ACR returned from Iraq, many members of the Regiment and their families were faced with decisions regarding their future. A flurry of activity began as representatives of the Army's Human Resources Command geared up to help the members of the Regiment determine whether they would move to Fort Hood, remain at Fort Carson or take advantage of other opportunities.

The Regiment is scheduled to uncasing its colors at Fort Hood in July, 2006 where it will begin a 3 year life-cycle management plan after it has completed the reset of its weapons and equipment. As it has many times in the past, the 3d ACR will integrate many new members into the Brave Rifles family, training them for future deployments in support of the Global War on Terrorism as well as any other contingencies that may arise. The 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment will continue its long, proud history, serving on the frontiers of freedom, as the last heavy cavalry regiment in the Army.